DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 402 078 PS 024 854

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TITLE Report on the Activities of the States Using Child Care and Development Block Grant Quality Improvement Funds.
INSTITUTION National Child Care Information Center, Vienna, VA.
SPONS AGENCY Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (DHHS), Washington, DC. Child Care Bureau.
PUB DATE Aug 96
CONTRACT 105-94-1626
NOTE 45p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Agency Cooperation; *Block Grants; Certification; Community Coordination; Consumer Education; Coordination; *Day Care Centers; *Early Childhood Education; Early Parenthood; Family Day Care; Financial Support; Professional Development; Program Descriptions; State Aid; State Government; State Programs; State Surveys; Statewide Planning
IDENTIFIERS *Child Care and Development Block Grants; Child Care Resource Centers; Day Care Licensing; Family Resource and Support Programs; Resource and Referral Service

ABSTRACT

This report provides an overview of the activities funded in 1994 by states using funds available for quality improvement and supply building in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). Information on the activities was obtained through mail surveys conducted by the National Child Care Information Center with 45 states and territories responding. Selected descriptions of funded projects are provided--with the grant amount where available--in each of nine topic areas: (1) systems of professional development; (2) child care resource and referral agencies; (3) consumer education and support of families; (4) support of licensing; (5) development of family child care networks; (6) state certification of quality programs; (7) programs for teen parents; (8) community coordinators and interagency facilitators; and (9) leveraging funds. Following the topic descriptions, there is a synopsis of the activities funded through the CCDBG quality improvement funds. Contains 23 references (called "Resources") and a list of block grant administrators. (KDFB)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Administration for Children and Families
Child Care Bureau

ED 402 078

Report on the Activities of the States Using Child Care and Development Block Grant Quality Improvements Funds

PS 024854

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REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE STATES USING CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDS

Prepared for the
Child Care Bureau
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Administration for Children and Families
Department of Health and Human Services

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August, 1996

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Introduction

This report is intended to give an overview of the activities funded by the states using the funds available for quality improvement and supply building in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). States were asked to provide information about projects funded from January 1, 1994 to December 31, 1994 using CCDBG funds, regardless of category[1]. In each of the topic areas discussed, selected descriptions of funded projects have been provided with the amount of the grant award where that information is available.

Under the Child Care and Development Block Grant regulations, each state is able to set its own goals and priorities for the funds, and can fund a wide range of activities, including direct service, resource and referral, licensing and monitoring, grants and loans to help providers meet licensing standards, and funds to improve compensation. Within these broad categories, the information provided by the states demonstrates a strong commitment to quality, as well as a commitment to the children and families in each community. States have used the funds to create statewide systems to serve families seeking child care, professional development systems, networks for family child care providers and supports for providers at all levels in every community in the state.

The information in this report was provided by the states in a voluntary mail survey conducted by the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC). Each state was asked to respond to the short survey, and to include any documents that provided information about the projects funded through the quality improvement funds. Forty-five states and territories provided responses. In many cases, states were not able to provide calendar year data, as grants were made available based on the state fiscal year which covered many different periods. In those cases, states provided information for the 1994 fiscal year with additional information about funding decisions made in the 1993 and 1995 fiscal years.

The authors of the report wish to thank those states and territories that responded to the voluntary survey and gave of their time and their materials freely. The responding states and territories are: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virgin Islands, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

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[1]The Child Care and Development Block Grant was divided into two categories of available funding. The 75% funds were available for direct service and for activities to improve the quality and availability of child care. The 25% funds were reserved for quality improvement and supply building activities, including establishing or expanding and conducting early childhood development programs and before and after school services, directly operating or funding the development of child care resource and referral programs, making grants or loans available to child care providers, improving monitoring and enforcement of child care standards, offering training and technical assistance to child care providers and improving compensation for child care providers.

Previous reports of the expenditures for quality improvements through the Child Care and Development Block Grant have been done by the Children's Defense Fund and the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF). This report builds on the information in those resources. The ACYF report on the quality improvement funds described state activities by the categories described in the CCDBG regulations. As the report stated in the introduction "in practice, Grantees conduct activities that fall into more than one category." *Investing in Our Children's Care*, the CDF publication, divided the selected state activities into selected topic areas. This report is also divided into topics, with a number of differences in the format and in the topic areas discussed.

While every state reported expenditures for direct services to children in particular categories, such as infants and toddlers, school-age children, full-day programs for children in Head Start, families with special needs and children with disabilities, we did not include examples of direct service. Instead, we have tried to include broad topic areas that, in addition to the high quality direct services funded, have improved the overall quality and supply of child care available to families in each state.

Nine topics were chosen after the surveys had been received and analyzed. They focus on the development of systems—in professional development, statewide resource and referral agencies and networks of family child care providers. Other systemic ways that states have focused on improving the quality and availability of child care include the support of the state child care licensing agency, special funds for coordinators and liaisons at the state and community level, and through leveraging of funds.

With the recent passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, states are required to use four percent of the Child Care and Development Fund for quality improvement activities. They have been given increased flexibility to fund projects that meet the needs of families and communities throughout their state. In many communities, the most immediate needs will be to improve the capacity of the existing child care system and to find ways to build in quality as new providers enter the system. The projects discussed in this report serve as useful illustrations of ways the Child Care and Development Block Grant has been used to meet these goals, and may be used by states as starting points as they implement the new legislation.

The projects discussed in the body of this report are not presented as models, but as examples of the activities undertaken by each state to improve the quality and increase the supply of child care in centers and in family child care homes across their states. In each example, the goal of the project has been highlighted in bold and italics to make it easy for users to scan the material.

The information used to prepare the examples came from several sources. In many cases, project summaries were prepared by the state in response to the survey. In others, a variety of information was used to create a picture of the project. Not every state that responded to the survey is included, due to missing or incomplete information. Additional information about each project can be obtained by contacting the state Child Care and Development Block Grant administrator. A complete list of state child care administrators is included as an appendix to this report.

Following the topic descriptions, there is a synopsis of the activities funded through the CCDBG quality improvement funds. This matrix includes several categories that are not listed in the nine

topics. In most cases, these categories have been combined with others and described in the included topic areas.

This report has been prepared by the staff of the National Child Care Information as part of the Child Care Technical Assistance Project, which is funded by the Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through contract #105-94-1626 with Trans-Management Systems Corporation (T-MSC) in cooperation with Collins Management Consulting, Inc. (CMC). No official endorsement of any practice, publication or individual by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Adminstration for Children and Families, the Child Care Bureau or the National Child Care Information Center is intended or is to be inferred.

Systems of Professional Development

- *Several states have created statewide career development systems or have developed curricula in support of degree programs (CO, HI, LA, MD, MN, NC, OR, PA).*
- *Many states have made training available to providers through scholarships for Child Development Associate (CDA) and other credential training, organizational memberships, scholarships to attend state and national conferences, support for state conferences and workshops on specialized topics.*
- *States also provide incentive awards and grants to centers and family child care providers to receive accreditation from national organizations (AL, AR, DE, DC, IL, KY, ND, NE, NH).*
- *Special incentives to promote professional development are offered by a few states such as a loan assumption program for providers who receive a child development degree (CA) and a $250 incentive award to providers who earn 60 additional hours of early childhood training (MT).*
- *Another initiative that has been funded is specialized training for center administrators (GA, KY [for administrators of school-age programs], MI, NY, UT).*
- *Other innovative projects include funding for mobile vans to take training materials to rural providers (AL), training in artistic disciplines (AZ), training and use of peer reviewers (CA), training for pediatricians and librarians to work with child care providers (MD), and video training (CO, MN, NY).*
- *Targeted training for family child care providers has also been used extensively (AZ, CO, DE, DC, HI, IL, IA, NY, UT).*

A January 1991 report by Gwen Morgan for the Center of Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock College begins with a conclusion: the key to quality lies in the professional development of practitioners (*Career Progression in Early Care and Education: A Discussion Paper*). Further, *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers*, a report from the University of Colorado at Denver, found that staff education is one of the primary factors necessary for high quality child care settings. "[C]ertain characteristics distinguish poor, mediocre, and good-quality centers, the most important of which are teacher wages, education and specialized training."

Recognizing the value of training for child development, every state has used the quality improvement funds to train providers at every stage of their early childhood careers, creating opportunities which did not exist prior to the Child Care and Development Block Grant. According to the Children's Defense Fund, in 1989 "nearly half of the states either made no attempt to meet the training needs of child care providers or provided only minimal assistance." (*Investing in Our Children's Care: An Analysis and Review of State Initiatives to Strengthen the Quality and Build the Supply of Child Care Funded through the Child Care and Development Block Grant*)

To address the issues of professionalization, turnover and staff development that the above studies have identified as crucial to quality child care, several states have invested in career development systems. In many cases, these include partnerships with community colleges and state university

systems and with public television networks, as well as the full involvement of local resource and referral agencies and providers. One component of these systems in some states has been the formation of apprenticeship and mentoring programs designed to help both experienced providers and new providers enhance the services they provide to children. States have also funded the creation of family child care networks to help create and maintain a stable supply of family child care. Most states also provide funds for scholarships to help providers receive a Child Development Associate (CDA) or other credential and to assist centers as they seek accreditation (for additional information on accreditation and credentialing systems for child care providers, see *Child Care Bulletin*, Issue 3, "Staffing and Accreditation").

The wide range of training activities funded demonstrates the range of needs that states face both in delivering services and in increasing the knowledge base and skills of providers, administrators, licensing agencies and parents. To deliver the training services to as many providers as possible, states have utilized local and regional resource centers for providers, videos that providers can use in their home, mobile vans, partnerships with universities and colleges and satellite technology to let providers receive training in their homes. Training funds have been used to develop curricula for providers caring for infants and toddlers, for school-age children, family child care providers and for children with disabilities and to address some of the managerial aspects of providing child care through training in stress management, record keeping, and conflict resolution. Specialized training opportunities have also been developed for administrators and program directors.

Alabama has used ***resource centers***, through the local child care management agencies, to make training videos, tapes, professional literature, children's books, curriculum resources, theme based boxes, games, and toys available to providers on a check out basis. Using mobile vans, the resource center staff are able to take these materials to rural providers, and to family and group child care providers. The mobile vans also allow the staff of the resource centers to provide on-site training for providers who are unable to travel to training. The state also provides pre-licensing training for prospective child care providers on the business aspects of family child care, age appropriate activities, child development and positive guidance.

Using $300,000 in grants to complement state funds, **Alaska** has created three ***regional resource development agencies*** to serve its providers. The agencies provide training for exempt caregivers and for those participating in the child care subsidy program. Areas of training include early childhood development, infant and toddler care, school-age care, first aid and CPR, health and safety issues, special needs and facility administration. The agencies also maintain a resource library for providers. In a partnership with the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, CCDBG Native American grantees, the University of Alaska and the Fairbanks Kiwanis chapter, the state participated in a train the trainer program for infant and toddler caregivers.

California has created several innovative training projects. Through a network of 70 community college campuses, the state has created the ***child development training consortium*** to assist staff in meeting the qualifications of the Children's Center Instruction Permit and to meet special training needs of specific groups in the child development community. The training course has had real success in meeting the needs of providers, with a 97% course completion rate. The consortium receives $1.3 million in funds from the state. A second program is the Sesame Street Preschool

Project. Through a $320,000 contract with five public television stations using materials developed by the Children's Television Workshop, the training is designed to give consistent access to quality training to family child care providers and to provide high quality education experiences and interactions between child care providers and preschool-aged children.

A ***mentor teacher project*** is available at 25 community college campuses, through contracts totaling $680,000. This program provides students with an alternative placement for practicum experiences while offering additional salary compensation to mentor teachers. The mentor teachers receive extensive training on supervision of students and their classrooms receive a formal program review.

In addition, the state funds ***recruitment and training of peer reviewers*** and the development of materials to support the Exemplary Program Standards project. Peer reviewers are trained by local providers who have received training from the Child Development Division. Local consortia were formed to support the peer review process and to maximize the impact of trainings. As an additional incentive to participate, peer reviewers receive $50 toward educational materials and resources from the State Department of Education. The program was allocated $200,000.

Finally, California has made a commitment to the professional development of its child care providers through the ***Child Development Teacher Loan Assumption Program***, at a cost of $200,000. The program is designed to encourage students to become trained in child development and to stay in the child care field. To be eligible, providers will be required to teach or supervise full-time for two years in a licensed center where at least 50% of the children served are in families whose income is below 85% of the state median income or whose families are eligible for state or federal child care subsidy programs.

Following the recommendations of the Governor's Early Childhood Professional Standards Task Force, **Colorado** has established the ***Career Development System for Early Childhood Education*** to create a seamless articulation process for early childhood programs in secondary schools, two-year, four-year and graduate institutions, and a mechanism which bridges non-credit and credited programs. The system is funded through collaborations with numerous agencies, and the state has committed $10,000 of CCDBG funds to the process. Activities in the planning and implementation of the system include a higher education conference to develop a vision for early childhood education, design assessment measures for the competencies, create an Early Childhood Education Consortium, disseminate "Colorado's Areas of Core Knowledge and Competencies—A Guide for Early Childhood Development," train faculty, and contract for a study to measure the effectiveness of the competencies.

The state has also recognized the barriers faced by family child care providers in accessing training and in meeting the costs of training. As a result, they developed a 12 hour ***self-study prelicensing training video*** for family child care providers using a $20,000 grant to Aims Community College.

Georgia has implemented two programs using the Child Care and Development Block Grant funds to improve the quality of child care through training and professional development. The state has developed a 40 hour ***training curriculum to credential child care center administrators***. They have also begun to plan for a professional development system. The plan for the system includes all

aspects of care, including early childhood, school-age, special needs, and family child care.

In **Hawaii**, training funds are being used to increase the quality and availability of child care providers through two programs, with a total set aside of over $360,000. The state has developed and tested a ***modularized curriculum for the early childhood field*** to provide incremental, community-based training. Credits from these training opportunities can be applied toward degree programs. In addition, a family child care training program and resource lending center has been developed and implemented on the island of Oahu.

Through a project with the Dayton-Hudson Child Care Aware campaign, ***family child care providers*** in five counties in **Illinois** were recruited to ***receive extensive training, support and assistance*** from the National Family Day Care Association through the Family to Family Initiative. Participating family child care providers worked toward formal accreditation. The project is funded with $8,675 in Child Care and Development Block Grant funds and with grants from state, other federal and private and corporate funds.

Using a statewide plan developed through assessments of provider needs, **Maryland** has provided a range of provider training. They have also opened training opportunities to non-traditional participants such as librarians and pediatricians. The statewide training plan, known as "A New Beginning: A Blueprint for a Career Development and Training Plan for Maryland," was developed, disseminated and implemented through a $264,000 grant with the Statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network. As part of the professional development plan in the state, Loyola College received a $50,000 grant to create the ***Institute for Child Care Education***. The Institute provides a comprehensive master's level plan of education for before- and after-school child care providers. Through the Institute, new curriculum and resource materials were developed to support school-age child care professionals. The Institute also provides training throughout the state and has developed resource kits for providers to use as follow-up activities that supplement the training workshops.

Montana encourages its child care providers by awarding ***incentive grants*** of $250 to every provider who gains 60 hours of early childhood training. The program is funded by $35,000 in Child Care and Development Block Grant funds.

To supplement ***Child Care Careers, the statewide training curriculum***, **Oklahoma** has funded a number of special training projects. Child Care Careers, developed through a $184,500 grant of both state and CCDBG funds, is offered through the State Department of Vocational Education. The state has also provided $20,000 for three 13 hour workshops entitled "Unique Environments" for providers serving children with disabilities. Once the workshops are completed, providers obtain a certification and may receive a higher rate of reimbursement. Other grants of over $63,000 support collaborative long distance training for Head Start staff and family child care providers, scholarships to providers to attend conferences, and purchases of resource materials available to providers on a check out basis. To insure that the training system is meeting the needs of providers, the state has also provided $51,000 to the University of Oklahoma to survey the training gaps in the state and to provide a professional development coordinator to complete the training plan for the child care industry in the state.

Rhode Island has provided a grant of $138,000 to create and support the ***Rhode Island Child Care Training System*** to improve quality, build supply and enhance early childhood development through courses, workshops and conferences and scholarships for CDA and other credentials. The system is designed to meet the needs of the entire early care and education community. A primary goal of the training system is to promote the inclusion of young children with disabilities in community based early care and education programs. The contract has also funded the development of a resource center and lending library and a head teacher academy.

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&R) are funded to provide a wide variety of quality improvement activities. In addition to information and referral to all families, the R&Rs provide consumer and parent education, collect data on local programs, do community needs assessments, recruit and train providers and help local providers to leverage additional resources from public and private resources (AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, FL, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, MD, MA, MI, MN, MO, MT, NH, NJ, NY, NC, ND, OK, OR, PA, RI, TN, WA, WI). Many states have established statewide networks.
Several innovative CCR&R projects have been undertaken, including a 24-hour InfoLine for information, referral and crisis management (CT) and direct funding of CCR&R staff positions (TN).

States have found that one of the most important activities they can fund with the funds available for quality improvement are services that help parents through information, referrals and through recruitment of additional providers in local communities. In many states, one way to achieve this goal has been through funding for state or local child care resource and referral agencies, often with a mandate to provide consumer education to families, as well as training for providers.

In its report *Making Child Care Work: A Study of Child Care Resource and Referral in the United States*, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) listed four general areas that describe the activities of child care resource and referral. These include supporting families, compiling, analyzing and sharing information, supporting the individuals and programs that care for children and building connections in communities and states. The activities funded by states through the Child Care and Development Block Grant quality improvement funds fall into each of these categories. The NACCRRA report finds that, through this and other funding sources, statewide services were in place in 31 states, and an additional 15 states had plans to fund statewide resource and referral services.

While many states have opted to fund child care resource and referral agencies, there are many different ways to achieve that goal. Some states have chosen to use a central agency with a toll-free access number. Others have funded local agencies throughout the state to meet the needs of families within their communities. In each case, the quality funds are being used to meet a wide range of family needs—from infant care to school-age care, from care for children with disabilities to family child care providers in underserved communities.

Several states have designed the program with a central resource and referral agency that subcontracts with other agencies to do a variety of activities. In addition to the primary goal of helping families meet their child care needs, resource and referral agencies may recruit providers, provide training and technical assistance, do intake and eligibility checks for families receiving a child care subsidy, and inspect family child care homes and centers. They may also be used as the contact point for families needing a wide range of services, including crisis counseling and access to other human services providers.

In addition, many states also use the resource and referral agency as a bridge between the public sector, private organizations and businesses or other private agencies. The resource and referral agency may be the result of collaboration between several agencies, or part of its mandate may be to reach out to other entities in the community to help meet the needs of families.

California dedicated over $1.9 million for resource and referral programs to create ***71 agencies serving all 58 counties*** in the state. The agencies have been funded to assist families to make informed choices for child care, to provide information and materials for both consumers and providers of child care, and to act as local clearinghouses of information, training and assistance in their community. To serve parents, each agency maintains lists of licensed child care providers in the community and lists of licensed exempt center-based programs operated by public school districts. Many programs have toy lending libraries for child care providers. Programs provide information about recruitment, training and licensing of new child care providers and training opportunities for both providers and parents. The CCDBG funds augment an appropriation from the California General Fund for resource and referral services.

Through the Governor's Office and the Division of Child Care, **Colorado** has devoted $600,000 to the ***Colorado Office of Resource and Referral Agencies*** (CORRA). The program provides assistance to low-income families seeking both child care subsidies and providers. The resource and referral services were created to promote quality through consumer education, and to help increase the supply of child care by recruiting providers and providing technical assistance to businesses and local providers.

With $250,000 in Child Care and Development Block Grant funds, the state United Way in **Connecticut** has created and maintains a ***computerized database of the state's licensed child care facilities***. This service is made available to families as the Child Care Division of InfoLine, a statewide toll-free information, referral and crisis line. This resource provides all callers with a central point of entry to the human services systems in the state. InfoLine is available 24 hours a day to provide referrals and to respond to questions and concerns about child care from parents and providers. In addition, InfoLine produces a Directory of Community Services for each region in the state.

Indiana has developed a ***statewide resource and referral network***. Each of the participating agencies is given the flexibility to meet the needs of the local community while maintaining access to information and resources as part of a statewide association. Each agency provides referrals and consumer education for parents and training and technical assistance for providers. Approximately $400,000 of Child Care and Development Block Grant funds are available for child care resource and referral. In addition, funding has been provided from the Dependent Care grant and many of the agencies receive private grants from corporations.

Three agencies in **Louisiana** have been funded to create a ***statewide child care resource and referral network*** using $376,516 from the Child Care and Development Block Grant funds for quality improvement. Each agency is responsible for providing parent counseling, support for child care providers and advocacy for child care and for at-risk children.

Michigan combines funds from the Child Care and Development Block Grant ($468,221), the Dependent Care Grant, Title XX funds and state monies for contracts with 14 ***regional Resource and Referral agencies***. Each agency provides assistance to parents in finding, choosing and paying for quality child care and coordinates activities in the community to build the supply of child care available to families through meetings, community needs assessments, recruitment and collaboration with other state and local agencies. The child care resource and referral agencies also conduct public awareness campaigns about the availability of child care, needs of the community and resources available through the agency and through other state and local agencies.

By providing over $400,000 in grants to both community level and statewide resources, **New Jersey** has created a ***statewide child care resource and referral system***. ***Local agencies***, most familiar with the resources in the community, provide resource and referral services to families in the community, provide technical assistance and training to local providers, identify the child care needs of the community, develop child care resources and promote public awareness of the child care issues in the community they serve. The local agencies are supported by ***Regional Resource Centers***, which coordinate the activities of resource and referral agencies in their regions and provide resource and referral services as necessary. At the state level, a ***statewide child care clearinghouse*** has been funded to coordinate the statewide activities of the CCR&R system, provide technical assistance as needed to Regional Resource Centers, analyze and interpret the data collected by regional and local resource and referral agencies, and serve as a link to child care resource and referral systems throughout the United States.

Through several public-private agencies, **North Dakota** has created a network of resource and referral agencies to serve the state. In each agency, parents can receive assistance to locate available child care. The agencies also train providers to improve the quality of the services and coordinate the training needs of providers throughout the state. In particular, ***local resource and referral agencies facilitate the Infant/Toddler Initiative Training***, a special project funded with the assistance of the Bush Foundation. The resource and referral agencies in the statewide network also administer the state mentoring program for child care providers, in which experienced providers commit to spending one year mentoring a novice child care provider.

Tennessee contracts with $1.3 million in grants to ***14 local agencies***, both public and nonprofit, ***to manage the child care subsidy system and to provide local counseling services to parents***. The agencies, known as Child Care Brokers, have helped the state achieve its goal of parental choice and improved consumer education for families eligible of Child Care and Development Block Grant programs. To meet a second goal of expanded resource and referral services for all parents needing assistance in identifying and selecting child care, the state set aside five percent of the CCDBG funds for two staff positions at the Department of Human Services Resource and Referral Service. These staff members assisted parents in selecting child care, provided child care directories and supplied data to different state and local agencies. Dependent Care Grant funds were also used to provide this service.

Consumer Education and Support of Families

In addition to the activities included in resource and referral agency contracts, states have undertaken special projects to educate parents about the value of quality in child care programs (AL, AK, AZ, DC, IN, NY, MD, TN). These include one-on-one counseling with parents (AL), the "Who's Watching Your Kids" campaign (AK), coordinated campaigns with other state agencies such as the Department of Education, Department of Health Services and the Governor's Office for Children and development of a "Kid's Safety Calendar" (AZ), and development of a consumer handbook "Choosing Child Care: A Guide for Maryland Families" (MD).

Other projects that support families efforts to find quality child care include funding for child care programs that are partnerships with parents, including special grants to establish and support relationships with parents and teachers and to improve the quality of parental contacts (IL) and to gather information about reaching and working with fathers from low-income, high risk populations (MD).

A primary goal of the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and of many statewide child care resource and referral agencies, is to help parents choose the best child care provider. Parents cannot meet the needs of their child or of the family as a whole if they do not have any information to help them choose. To that end, states have contributed the quality improvement funds to special projects to educate parents about quality child care—what it looks like, how to find it, and how to be an educated consumer of child care.

In addition, states have found that many parents have additional needs for information about resources that are available in the community. Nationally, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies found that 167 local resource and referral agencies were funded to offer enhanced referrals and counseling for very low-income families working toward self sufficiency.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant regulations require states to make information available to parents on applicable licensing requirements, the option of contracted care, parent's rights to have unlimited access to their children while using child care, procedures for parental complaints and the indicators of child abuse. States have made this information available using established child care resource and referral networks, family child care associations and networks and opportunities to reach parents through public service campaigns and media announcements. States have also funded the development of materials that explain quality child care and include checklists on what to look for, health and safety guidelines, opportunities for counseling and links to other supportive resources in the community.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant funds have been used in **Alabama** to ***educate parents through videos, pamphlets, one-on-one counseling opportunities, health and safety checklists and parent education sessions*** at the Child Care Management Agencies. In addition, one region began the Parents as Teachers program, which includes home visits and parent group meetings to help

parents understand and enrich their child's development. This project was created through a collaborative arrangement with the Birmingham City School System and the University of Alabama in Birmingham and was funded by the Alabama Power Foundation Children's Trust Fund, Greater Birmingham Foundation, Robert R. Meyer Foundation and the Birmingham Public Schools, with funds from the Child Care and Development Block Grant.

Alaska launched a multiphase ***consumer education campaign known as "Who's Watching Your Kids."*** The materials were designed to tell parents how to choose quality child care, and to encourage them to seek providers with programs that meet the recommended guidelines. The materials for the second phase were designed for caregivers, with a campaign logo saying "Who's Watching Your Kids—I'm Watching Your Kids." The materials were distributed to caregivers participating in the child care subsidy program, as well as child care resource and referral agencies and child care licensing field offices. Each caregiver received a canvas bag with posters, parent brochures on choosing and maintaining quality care, and stickers inside. Through the $20,000 campaign, 5,000 canvas bags were produced and distributed.

Many government agencies participate to educate child care consumers in **Arizona**. These include the Department of Education, which received a grant of $173,500 for provider and parent education as well as other activities, the Governor's Office for Children, and the Department of Health Services, which received $600,000 to develop provider and parent education and to maintain and coordinate complaints received about child care providers. Through a $30,000 grant, the Governor's Office created a "Kid's Safety Calendar" which was disseminated to parents and providers to inform them about safe practices in the home as children grow and mature.

A consumer education initiative has been launched in the **District of Columbia** using $18,000 from the Child Care and Development Block Grant. The goal of the initiative is to ***inform residents of the District about the range of child care services available*** through subsidy programs, to "generate common attitudes toward the use of D.C. child care services" and "to change any negative attitudes toward D.C. child care services." Emphasis is placed on reaching the parents of infants, children with special needs and parents needing child care for their children before and after school, with different messages for each group. Using diverse tools such as newspapers, pamphlets, flyers, messages on Government employee pay stubs, transit advertising and messages on Metro (public transportation) farecards, the District has made an extensive effort to reach people in all areas of the community.

Consumer education and support for families needs is carried out on the local level in **Illinois**. Local programs have received grants of $50,000 or less to improve quality through increased and improved parental contacts with the center staff and for support of the relationship between teachers and parents, to hire a social worker/translator to provide counseling to the local families in the community who are non-native speakers of English, and to fund a family facilitator to hold workshops and consultations with teachers and parents in a program for children with special needs

Several initiatives in **Maryland** are increasing parental knowledge about quality child care. In local communities, ***teen parents can receive training and technical assistance*** on choosing child care. Special curriculums which include workbooks and other materials have been developed to help

adolescent parents identify and choose quality child care. These projects are funded with local grants of $20,000. As part of a $264,000 grant to the Statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network, the state has funded a consumer handbook entitled "Choosing Child Care: A Guide for Maryland Families" which will be widely disseminated.

The state also provided a $9,995 grant to a local program to gather and disseminate information about the challenges of ***reaching and working successfully with fathers*** from low-income, high risk populations. The program reviewed and discussed the difficulties facing fathers in the nineties, examined the existing research on effective ways to support men in their role as parents, collected information about existing projects that focus on strengthening the relationships between fathers and their children in low-income, high risk communities, and helped the child care community identify practical ways to support father's development of positive parenting skills.

Supporting Licensing

Funds were used to support the state licensing office or to directly finance staff positions in the licensing and monitoring office. These positions were used to train and recruit new providers, license and monitor providers and to provide technical assistance to providers (AL, AK, CO, CT, FL, LA, KS, KY, MI, MT, NE, NH, NC, NV, ND, OK, OR, RI, TN, WI).
Innovative projects in licensing included a "Child Care Quality Improvement Study" to determine the extent to which changes in regulations affect quality (FL), a study of regulations and rules, with a comparison between the state rules and nationally recognized standards (HI, AZ), grants to District Health Departments to monitor unlicensed child care homes for health and safety compliance and to supply providers with basic health and safety information (ID), grants to programs to help them come into compliance (MD, SD), and training for licensors to help them further understand the issues in early childhood programs (WA).

The Census Bureau reported in *Who's Minding the Preschoolers?* that in 1993, 9.9 million children under 5 were in need of child care while their mothers worked. Thirty percent were cared for in organized child care facilities, a 30 percent increase from 1991. An additional 18 percent were served by family child care providers. The families of these children want to know that their providers follow guidelines for safe and healthy child care, a primary component of quality child care facilities.

Across the country, states maintain health and safety standards through their licensing agencies. In addition to researching and writing regulations, these agencies are often responsible for monitoring providers for compliance with the rules. In many states, the licensing agency serves as a technical assistance provider for child care centers and family child care homes, answering questions and locating resources. However, as the number of centers and homes grows, many state licensing agencies have found it difficult to visit providers on a regular basis. As licensing staff struggle to keep up with an ever growing caseload, some have also found it difficult to follow current research in early childhood education.

To meet these needs and augment the capacity of the state licensing agency, many states have added Child Care and Development Block Grant quality improvement funds to the licensing budget. With these additional funds, licensing agencies have added staff, hired staff for specialized early childhood positions, provided additional training for licensing staff and contracted with other organizations to monitor providers.

The quality improvement funds used for licensing and monitoring have also been used to help improve the communication between the licensing agency and other agencies in the state. Several states have funded a staff person to serve as the liaison between the child care agency and the licensing agency. In other cases, the staff person for collaboration has been assigned to work with the Department of Health or the Department of Children, Youth and Families.

With $69,500, **Alaska** supports a ***position in the state child care licensing office to serve as a child care resource within the licensing agency*** and to act as a liaison with the lead agency for administration of the Child Care and Development Block Grant. The staff position also acts as a liaison with other state, local and private agencies and professional organizations involved in child care. Another task of this position is to coordinate with Alaskan Native grantees to extend family child care licensing activities to remote rural areas of the state. The licensing agency child care liaison also provides information to the public on child care licensing regulations.

In **Arizona**, a ***research study*** was launched with a $53,500 grant ***to review all child care regulatory requirements***. The purpose of the study was to assist the state in identifying and addressing regulatory issues, particularly where inconsistencies existed with legislation. The researchers also facilitated study groups to evaluate policy options for future action.

Through a grant with the University of South Florida, the state of **Florida** provided $21,000 to fund the ***Florida Child Care Quality Improvement Study***. The goal of the study was to determine the extent to which regulatory changes in Florida's licensing laws affect the provision of quality child care and education for young children. An additional grant of $1.979 million was used for training and to improve staffing ratios in the local licensing offices, which monitor both child care centers and family child care homes for compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements.

Another study was done by **Hawaii** using a grant of $160,000. The state conducted a ***comprehensive review of regulations affecting early childhood education programs***. The review began with a series of forums in which providers and regulators presented the issues in their programs. The issues raised were used to form the basis of the analysis and review of the state child care regulations. The final report includes a comparison of Hawaii's regulations with different types of nationally recognized standards.

Idaho has launched a ***collaborative effort with seven District Health Departments to monitor unlicensed child care homes for compliance with basic health and safety standards***. Unlicensed providers give the state a self-declaration that they are in compliance with the health and safety standards. The local District Health Departments visit each provider once a year to insure that they are in compliance with the self-declaration. The $440,000 agreement also requires the local Health Departments to provide training and technical assistance around health and safety issues.

In an ongoing commitment to improving the capacity of the state licensing agency, **Iowa** provides funds to ***place Department of Human Services licensing and monitoring staff in each of the five regional offices*** across the state. The grant from the Child Care and Development Block Grant for salary and support for these positions was $285,523 in FY 1994. Each of the staff in the local licensing offices is available to new and existing providers in the community for consultation around start-up, expansion and improvement of program quality.

In **Rhode Island**, $50,000 in CCDBG funds were allocated to fund a ***position in the licensing unit*** of the Department for Children, Youth and Families. Family child care providers had reported to the state that the time spent waiting for initial certification and the lag in renewal of licenses was a

deterrent to becoming a certified family child care provider or a licensed center in the state. This position was added to augment the capacity of the licensing unit.

All child care providers in **South Dakota** must be registered or licensed with the state to receive public funds. To assist providers in meeting the requirements, small grants are made from the Child Care and Development Block Grant ***quality improvement funds for meeting health and safety facility requirements***. Funded projects have included the purchase of fire safety equipment, safety fences and installation of required exits. Providers who receive these grants make a commitment to remain providers in the subsidy program for at least four years. If they do not, they must return a portion of the grant.

In **Washington**, a small amount of funds are spent to improve the state child care licensing system. These grants are primarily used to ***train licensing agency staff***.

Development of Family Child Care Networks

Many states have funded the development and support of family child networks through local recruitment effort and training and technical assistance (AL, AZ, FL, NY, TN). Several states have taken a different approach, in order to support the family child care providers. These include mini-grants for start-up of family child care providers (KY), mentoring projects (GA) and funds to help providers meet regulatory standards (MD).

Family child care providers are an important source of child care for many families. In "Who's Minding Our Preschoolers," the Census Bureau found that 18 percent of children under 5 in care were placed with family child care providers. As the General Accounting Office reported in *Promoting Quality in Family Child Care*:

> The flexibility of family child care makes it an attractive choice for parents...family child care providers...usually have longer hours, may provide weekend and evening care, and may accommodate the hours of parents working shifts. They are also more likely to offer part-time care...Part-time care is useful for those in the type of job training activities in which AFDC mothers participate. Hence, family child care is a frequent choice among low-income families. Between 18 and 20 percent of children under age 5 of poor, single, working mothers are in family child care.

This finding has special implications for the administrators of the Child Care and Development Block Grant. The CCDBG allows parents to choose their provider, and many working families are choosing to place their children in family child care.

To help improve the quality of family child care homes *The Study of Children in Family Child Care and Relative Care,* a report from the Families and Work Institute, makes an important recommendation. The authors found that providers who were able to interact and are involved with other providers are more likely to provide quality care. Based on this, they recommended that "national, state and local associations should be developed and supported to involve providers in social support and technical assistance networks." To implement this, the report offers a number of strategies for states, including linking family child care training initiatives to local family child care associations, developing community level family child care systems and using federal and other funding streams to fund family child care associations and networks.

Many states have followed the suggestions in the report, using the Child Care and Development Block Grant to fund support groups, local recruitment efforts, mentoring opportunities, links between training and local family child care associations and technical assistance for family child care providers. Additional information on state and local initiatives to support family child care providers is available in the *Child Care Bulletin*, Issue #8.

Through its Child Care Management Agencies, which develop a plan for quality improvement activities that meet the needs of providers in each local region, **Alabama** has been able to form

support groups for family child care providers. In the groups, providers are able to share ideas and their professional and personal experiences with other local providers.

By providing funds to an existing organization, **Florida** was able to leverage resources available for family child care providers. The state provided a grant of $17,771 to the Florida Family Child Care Home Association, enabling the association to ***increase the number of family child care providers***, with a special focus on those providers who serve families with infants. The Association recruited providers, provided training and support and contributed to the retention of family child care providers across the state.

Georgia has used the Child Care and Development Block Grant funds to increase the supply of quality family child care homes. This effort has taken several directions, including ***Project AIMS (Assistance in Meeting Standards)***. The Project collected a variety of information about family child care providers, focusing primarily on the level of regulatory compliance in family child care homes with access to technical assistance and in those where technical assistance was not available. In addition, the state has provided funds for the Community Family Child Care Quality Project, which offers mentoring opportunities to providers in three communities.

The Family Child Care Provider Grant Program in **Maryland** was established to provide ***financial support to registered family child care providers to help them meet regulatory requirements***. The grants may be used to pay zoning or other fees, purchase emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers and smoke alarms and to make repairs or improvements to the providers home. The grants are small, with a maximum award available of $500. In all, $122,000 in Child Care and Development Block Grant and state general funds were used to assist family child care providers.

Through a memorandum of understanding with the Human Resources Administration, **New York** provided $975,000 to operate ***networks for family child care providers***. Through the networks, providers have access to training and support services. In addition, the state provided $1.5 million in quality improvement funds to assist providers with the costs of starting a family child care program. The grants can be used for emergency equipment, developmentally appropriate toys and other materials. State funds are also used to provide these resources to providers.

The ***Family Home Registration Program*** in **Tennessee**, which is voluntary for license exempt caregivers, is an opportunity for family child care providers to enter the child care field. Providers also receive training in business operations and in early childhood development. At the end of the training, providers are issued a certification that they are a "professional child care provider," and they become eligible for a higher rate of reimbursement than unregulated providers. Many of the recruited providers become licensed caregivers.

State Certification of Quality Programs

Some states have launched quality improvement systems in which the state sets the standards for quality and certifies that providers meet those standards. The qualifying providers are issued special certificates verifying their level of quality (AR, WI).

The *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers* found that one of the primary criteria required for quality care is well trained staff. The study also found that "Centers that comply with additional standards beyond those required for licensing provide higher quality service." As part of the funding available for training, many states have encouraged providers to become better trained and accredited by providing technical assistance and scholarship opportunities for those who seek and attain accreditation from a national child care organization. The states have created incentives to recruit and retain accredited providers, acknowledging the direct link between accreditation and the level of quality.

Two states have expanded on this idea by creating their own state programs to certify higher quality centers. Through both legislative and regulatory processes, these states created certification systems for center and family child care providers. Programs that want to participate must meet standards above those in the licensing regulations. They receive technical assistance and grants from the state to move through the process. Incentives have been built in to encourage programs and providers to participate. Families may also be rewarded for choosing the higher quality programs through tax incentives.

The **Arkansas *Quality Child Care Approval System*** was created through a collaborative process between the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission and the Department of Education. According to the standards, "[c]ertified programs provide a physical environment supportive of children's physical and mental development, include an educational program that prepares children for school, has trained staff and view parents as an important part of their children's education." To participate, programs fill out an extensive initial application about the program, including information about parent involvement, curriculum, staff training, community involvement and other relevant information.

If the application is favorably reviewed, Early Childhood Commission staff visit the program to do an on-site assessment, using assessment instruments that apply to the type of program. Before placing an application with the Commission, programs can receive technical assistance from Arkansas State University to identify areas that may need improvement and grants for equipment, facility improvements and staff training. The state has made $40,000 available each year for the approval and accreditation process, with over $700,000 available for staff training and program quality enhancement grants which can be used to help the provider move toward the approval process.

Once accepted and certified as a quality program, the program is added to a list of approved centers which is made available to parents seeking child care. Families that choose an approved center

qualify for double the state dependent care income tax credit.

The **Wisconsin *Quality Child Care Initiative*** uses the Child Care and Development Block Grant to improve and maintain the quality of child care. Quality grants to help centers and family child care homes achieve *High Quality Standards* are the core of the program. An array of technical assistance is available to further the success of eligible grantees.

The *High Quality Standards* criteria include accreditation from a national organization, licensure by the state for at least one year, child care teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a one-year degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development or the provider has a training plan in place to meet this goal within one year, the program director must have at least a BA in Early Childhood Education/Child Development and at least 3 years of full-time teaching experience or has a training plan to meet this goal within one year, a plan has been developed to increase staff salaries and benefits and the program experiences staff turnover at a rate of 20 percent or less or has a plan in place to meet this standard within one year.

The state has provided a large number of resources to help programs meet the High Quality Standards, including quality improvement and staff retention grants, a statewide information clearinghouse which makes audiovisual and print materials available to providers, an early childhood credentialing system known as the Registry which assesses whether staff training credentials meet the High Quality Standards and identifies training resources, on-site technical assistance, mentor teacher training and management assistance.

The state has allocated $1.4 million in funds from the Child Care and Development Block Grant to provide quality enhancement grants and technical assistance that may be used to help meet the High Quality Standards.

Programs for Teen Parents

Many states have identified teen parents as a priority eligibility group for services. In addition, several have created state or local programs to support teens in their efforts to graduate from high school or to attain a GED (AZ, GA, HI, IL, LA, MD, NY, OR, OK, TN, WY). These programs are managed by a local project or by another state agency such as the State Department of Education. Some programs have special components for teen fathers and for teen mothers (MD).

According to "Involving Teen Parents in the Education of Their Children," a Fall 1992 report from the SECA Public Policy Institute, "births to teenagers comprise one fifth of all annual births in the United States." While teen parenting is not a new issue, the growth in the number of unmarried teen parents living in poverty (Center for Law and Social Policy, 1994) has made this an important area of public policy. Births to teen parents have a long-term impact on both the parents and the children. Teen parents are more likely to drop out of high school and have poor employment prospects. In addition, teenage parents may be less likely to have the necessary caregiving and parenting skills (reported in "Impact of Teenage Pregnancy in Florida: Issues, Implications and Recommendations for Prevention and Intervention," 1995, Florida Education and Employment Council for Women and Girls). Research also suggests that the children of teen parents may be more likely to enter the juvenile justice system and have academic or behavioral problems.

To help address this problem, many states have focused the resources available through the CCDBG quality improvement funds on teen parents. In the direct service program, states continue to give teen parents funding priority. Additionally, several states have established child care programs as part of comprehensive programs in schools to support teen parents. These programs have a number of goals, including keeping teen parents in school to help them achieve their educational and personal goals, providing quality child care opportunities for the children, and modeling positive caregiving for the teen parents.

The child care programs provided by states for teen parents have taken many forms. They may be administered by the local school district or another community agency. They may be a center on the school site or in the nearby community, or the children may be cared for through a network of family child care homes. While most programs are focused on the infant and toddler-age children of these parents, many communities are beginning to see a need for school-age programs for families with children entering pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. These programs have also provided an opportunity for states to partner with other state and local organizations to leverage funds in communities and school districts.

In cooperation with several large school districts, **Arizona** has devoted over $550,000 to ***create and maintain licensed child care programs for teen parents***. The program supports the parents while they work toward a high school diploma or GED. Other funds have been used to provide training targeted at caregivers working with teen parents and their children, as well as to provide opportunities for child care programs for teen parents to receive technical assistance in establishing

school-age and infant and toddler programs for teen parents. Other partners include the Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Arizona and local community agencies.

Similar projects were organized in **Hawaii**, which provided ***start-up grants to public high schools to establish child care centers in the schools***. In 1994, $25,000 was made available to one school. This was increased to $360,000 for six additional schools in the next calendar year. The goal of the centers is to support teen parents while they are in school and help them get a high school diploma. In most cases, the grants provide two semesters of child care. They also provide funds for the school district to plan the program and make any necessary renovations.

Providing comprehensive services is the goal of a program in **Illinois**. A $50,000 grant ***supports a program for teen mothers*** that includes a nurse practitioner, supplies needed to care for the children, and parent education materials. This program is focused on teen mothers with infants and toddlers.

Through grants to local agencies, school districts, and community colleges, **Maryland** has allocated over $403,000 to programs for teen parents. Each local project designs a program to meet the needs of parenting adolescents in its own community, providing infant and toddler care in some communities and school-age care in others. ***Child care is made available to the teen parents through either on-site child care or through funds that enhance resource and referral services in the community***. Some of the programs follow the school calendar, while others are full day, full year. Each of the programs provides comprehensive services to assist the teens in receiving a high school diploma or a GED. In addition, programs provide academic assistance, courses on responsible parenting, counseling for HIV/AIDS and substance abuse, employability, job skills training and family planning. ***Teen parents also receive consumer education*** to help them choose quality child care programs. Several programs assign a counselor, family coordinator or other case worker to work with the teen parents to support their academic goals. One program includes an education component that targets teen fathers, including workshops on the issues of fatherhood and activities that promote a positive relationship between the father and the child.

In **Oklahoma**, the ***Baby Steps Day Care and Teen Parenting Center*** provides an innovative response to the problems of teen parents and their children. Baby Steps provides convenient, accessible, affordable, quality care and other supports so that teen parents can complete their high school education. The program enhances the parenting skills of students by providing daily child care classes and hands-on lessons with the children in the center. Baby Steps is a partnership of several co-sponsors, including the Junior League of Norman, Inc., the Department of Human Services Office of Child Care, which provided a three-year start-up grant for the project using CCDBG funds, the Norman Public School, Head Start, and Juvenile Services, Inc. Together, this coalition provides support services, a parenting education curriculum, and child care for the teen parents and their children.

The **Oregon** Department of Education provides ***funds to school districts for start-up and operation of campus based child development centers for the children of teenage parents***. The parents are enrolled in regular high school programs, with the goal of attaining a diploma. The schools provide comprehensive services for the teen parents, beginning with a case worker who develops an

individualized plan. Services, including child care, are available at the school-site through partnerships with community health agencies, the local Private Industry Council, the Cooperative Extension Service and other local agencies. A focus of the program is on long term planning for the parents. As a result, before completing the high school program, teen parents have developed a post-graduation transition plan. In many cases the plan includes the opportunity for further education.

Community Coordinators and Interagency Facilitators

In some cases, states chose to fund targeted positions to achieve a particular outcome, including local child care coordinators to expand and improve the availability and quality of care (HI), a specially skilled clinical child care worker to work with at-risk and emotionally disturbed children (MD), a state child care program officer to coordinate and plan child care policy at the state level (MT), child care subsidy coordinators in rural counties to develop resources for unserved or underserved children (NC), coordinators to address infant/toddler training needs (ND), and a health surveyor to assist the state Department of Health with health surveys of child care centers (WA).
To facilitate communication at the state level, legislatures and governors have created committees to advise the governor and to make recommendations to improve the state child care program. These include the advisory Child Care and Early Childhood Education Coordinating Committee and the Child Care Rules and Regulation Committee (NE) and the Child Care Coordinating Committee, which facilitates communication among state agencies and makes recommendations to agencies and the legislature (WA).

Many states have created statewide seamless systems of child care to meet the needs of parents seeking child care subsidies. As these systems have been put in place, many states have found that particular areas of the state or selected parts of the system need additional resources for coordination. To meet these needs, several states have funded positions in selected counties or across the state to focus on improving the quality and supply of child care in that community.

Other states have found that the creation of a seamless system has brought many different organizations and state level agencies together, including Departments of Education, Human Services, and Social Services as well as licensing agencies and Health Departments. In order to facilitate the interaction among these different agencies and to efficiently serve the families in the child care system, several states have used the Child Care and Development Block Grant funds for committees to review and advise the different state agencies.

In **Hawaii**, the state has funded ***local child care coordinators***. The staff assigned to these positions are given the full-time task of expanding and improving the availability and quality of child care in the county. The positions are located in local mayoral offices to improve local collaboration and communication. The state has provided $80,000 in Child Care and Development Block Grant funds for the positions in Hawaii County and Kaui County.

To address child care and early education issues, **Nebraska** has created ***two statewide advisory committees***. The Child Care and Early Childhood Education Coordinating Committee and the Child Care Rules and Regulations Committee make recommendations to the governor and to the regulatory agencies in the state for ways to improve the quality of child care providers in the state. Child Care and Development Block Grant funds are used to reimburse the expenses of the two committees.

Funding for 16 coordinators in 21 counties has been provided by **North Carolina** to assist parents

receiving the child care subsidy. These ***coordinators*** are placed in rural parts of the state. Their goal is to ***develop child care resources in each county for unserved or underserved children***. Coordinators also inform parents about local child care options, make referrals, assist parents and providers in the enrollment process, and recruit providers. The state has allocated $475,000 in Child Care and Development Block Grant funds for these positions.

In a targeted effort to improve the child care available for infants and toddlers, **North Dakota** funds ***12 coordinators to address the need for infant and toddler training*** in each region of the state and on the Tribal reservations. These coordinators work in collaboration with a project funded by the Bush Foundation to provide Infant/Toddler training and train-the-trainer opportunities across the state.

The Department of Health in **Washington** helps the state insure that child care providers are in line with the basic health and safety standards required by conducting ***health surveys of all licensed child care centers*** both at the time of licensing and at every opportunity for relicensing. Child Care and Development Block Grant funds have been provided to the Department for an additional health surveyor.

The state also funds the ***Child Care Coordinating Committee*** to facilitate communication among the state agencies involved in child care. The Committee makes recommendations to agencies and the state legislature about needed improvements to both child care services and the child care system. Several subcommittees work toward improvements in specific areas, including career development, licensing, health and safety, school-age care and opportunities for partnerships.

Leveraging Funds

States have created special funds to help providers leverage resources. These include emergency mini-grants to licensed providers to help them maintain their licenses (NE), a provider loan fund through for quality improvement and supply building (NC) an early childhood facilities fund to train and link providers with corporate sponsors for capital improvement needs (NJ), business involvement grants (TN), and a revolving loan fund for expansion and improvement of child care centers (MD).

In "What Does It Cost to Mind Our Preschoolers?" the US Bureau of the Census found that in 1993 poor families spent 18 percent of their income on child care. The report also found that in constant dollars, the average weekly cost of child care has increased in every study since 1990. Quality programs, which may have a higher weekly fee, become increasingly difficult for families to access.

There are other funding issues facing the child care field as well. As Barbara Willer noted in *Reaching the Full Cost of Quality in Early Childhood Programs*, "the price parents pay is often far below the actual cost of service provision." The real cost of providing high quality child care, which takes into account full compensation for highly trained, professional staff, the value of in-kind services and donated materials, facilities designed to meet the emotional, physical and mental needs of children and services in the program that meet the needs of the entire family, is rarely equivalent to the funds available to the program.

As more families enter the workforce and need child care and as federal, state and local communities have fewer funds available for child care for low-income families, state governments have found that they must find new sources of financing and funding for child care. This need has led to the development of partnerships between states, local governments, national organizations and corporations. It has also led states to develop innovative projects to leverage the funds that are available. These projects have included loan funds, mini-grants for providers, emergency loans to help providers stay in business and grants to businesses that invest in child care. For additional information on child care financing projects across the country, see the *Child Care Bulletin*, Issue #10.

The Child Care Special Loan Fund in **Maryland** is administered through a $105,000 grant to the Department of Economic and Employment Development. A ***special revolving loan fund*** provides direct loans to providers in amounts ranging from $1,000 to $5,000 for the expansion or improvement of child care centers and to help providers meet state and local standards. All programs receiving loans are licensed and have agreed to serve subsidized children when they can be reasonably accommodated. A portion of the funds are specifically designed to support programs in meeting the needs of special needs children and the children of teenage custodial parents. Special consideration is given to facilities located in low and moderate income communities.

Nebraska has created a program to provide ***emergency mini-grants to licensed providers to help them maintain their present license***. Providers who apply may receive up to $2,000 to bring their

programs into compliance with state or local regulations or to help pay licensing fees.

The ***Early Childhood Facilities Fund*** in **New Jersey** is designed to provide early childhood providers with help in planning, financing, funding and developing quality facilities. Services are targeted in communities where strong partnerships are possible with foundations, the regional office and the Head Start community. The fund does not lend money directly, but provides workshops on facilities management and development issues, technical assistance for facilities development, design of finance demonstration projects and loan packaging.

The Self-Help Credit Union, a private nonprofit lending institution in **North Carolina** administers a $400,000 ***statewide revolving loan fund*** that is available to child care providers. The loans may be used to improve the quality of a program, to comply with state or local regulations or to increase the number of children served by the provider. Staff of the institution also provide technical assistance and conferences and have developed a business reference manual for child care providers. In addition to the funds available from the Child Care and Development Block Grant, the Rural Development Agency and the Small Business Administration have contributed to the fund.

Tennessee was able to use the Child Care and Development Block Grant to make two ***grants of $20,000 to communities in which local businesses have made a commitment to financially support the provision of child care services***. The grants can be used to start or expand child care programs in the communities.

Synopsis of CCDBG Quality Improvement Activities

Quality Improvement Activity	Description
Systems of Professional Development	Several states have created statewide career development systems or curricula in support of degree programs (CO, HI, LA, MD, MN, NC, OR, PA). Many states have made training available to providers through scholarships for Child Development Associate (CDA) and other credential training, organizational memberships, scholarships to attend state and national conferences, support for state conferences and workshops on specialized topics. States also provide incentive awards and grants to providers to receive accreditation from national organizations (AL, AR, DE, DC, IL, KY, ND, NE, NH). Special incentives to promote professional development are offered by a few states such as a loan assumption program for providers who receive a child development degree (CA) and a $250 incentive award to providers who earn 60 additional hours of early childhood training (MT). Specialized training for center administrators has also been funded (GA, KY [for administrators of school-age programs], MI, NY, UT). Other innovative projects include funding for mobile vans to take training materials to rural providers (AL), training in artistic disciplines (AZ), training and use of peer reviewers (CA), training for pediatricians and librarians to work with child care providers (MD), and video training (CO, MN, NY). Targeted training for family child care providers has also been used extensively (AZ, CO, DE, DC, HI, IL, IA, NY, UT).
Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies	Resource and Referral agencies are funded to provide a wide variety of quality improvement activities. In addition to information and referral to all families, the R&Rs provide consumer and parent education, collect data on local programs, do community needs assessments, recruit and train providers and help local providers to leverage additional resources from public and private resources (AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, FL, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, MD, MA, MI, MN, MO, MT, NH, NJ, NY, NC, ND, OK, OR, PA, RI, TN, WA, WI). Many states have established statewide networks. Several innovative R&R projects have been undertaken, including a 24-hour InfoLine for information, referral and crisis management (CT) and direct funding of R&R staff positions (TN).
Consumer Education and Support of Families	In addition to the activities included in resource and referral agency contracts, states have undertaken special projects to educate parents about the value of quality child care programs (AL, AK, AZ, DC, IN, NY, MD, TN). These include one-on-one counseling with parents (AL), the "Who's Watching Your Kids" campaign (AK), coordinated campaigns with other state agencies and development of a "Kid's Safety Calendar" (AZ), and development of a consumer handbook "Choosing Child Care: A Guide for Maryland Families" (MD). Projects have been funded to create child care programs that are partnerships with parents, including special grants to establish and support relationships with parents and teachers and to improve the quality of parental contacts (IL) and to gather information about reaching and working with fathers from low-income, high risk populations (MD).

Support for Licensing and Monitoring Activities	Funds were used to support the state licensing office or to directly finance staff positions in the licensing and monitoring office. These positions were used to train and recruit new providers, license and monitor providers and to provide technical assistance to providers (AL, AK, CO, CT, FL, LA, KS, KY, MI, MT, NE, NH, NC, NV, ND, OK, OR, RI, TN, WI). Innovative projects in licensing included a "Child Care Quality Improvement Study" to determine the extent to which changes in regulations affect quality (FL), a study of regulations and rules, with a comparison between the state rules and national standards (HI, AZ), grants to District Health Departments to monitor unlicensed child care homes for health and safety compliance and to supply providers with basic health and safety information (ID), grants to programs to help them come into compliance (MD, SD), and training for licensors to help them further understand the issues in early childhood programs (WA).
Development of Family Child Care Networks	Many states have funded the development and support of family child networks through local recruitment efforts, training and technical assistance (AL, AZ, FL, NY, TN) To better support the family child care providers, several states have also taken a different approach, including mini-grants for start-up of family child care providers (KY), mentoring projects (GA) and funds to help providers meet regulatory standards (MD).
State Certification of Quality Programs	Some states have launched quality improvement systems in which the state sets the standards for quality and certifies that providers meet those standards. The qualifying providers are issued special certificates verifying their level of quality (AR, WI).
Programs for Teen Parents	Many states have identified teen parents as a priority eligibility group for services. In addition, several have created state or local programs to support teens in their efforts to graduate from high school or to attain a GED (AZ, GA, HI, IL, LA, MD, NY, OR, OK, TN, WY). These programs are managed by a local project or by another state agency such as the State Department of Education. Some programs have special components for teen fathers and for teen mothers (MD).
Community Coordinators and Interagency Facilitators	In some cases, states chose to fund targeted positions to achieve a particular outcome, including local child care coordinators to expand and improve the availability and quality of care (HI), a specially skilled clinical child care worker to work with at-risk and emotionally disturbed children (MD), a state child care program officer to coordinate and plan child care policy at the state level (MT), child care subsidy coordinators in rural counties to develop resources for unserved or underserved children (NC), coordinators to address infant/toddler training needs (ND), and a health surveyor to assist the state Department of Health with health surveys of child care centers (WA). Legislatures and governors have created committees to advise the governor and to make recommendations to improve the state child care program. These include the advisory Child Care and Early Childhood Education Coordinating Committee and the Child Care Rules and Regulation Committee (NE) and the Child Care Coordinating Committee, which facilitates communication among state agencies and makes recommendations to agencies and the legislature (WA).

Leveraging funds	States have created special funds to help providers leverage resources. These include emergency mini-grants to licensed providers to help them maintain their licenses (NE), a provider loan fund through for quality improvement and supply building (NC) an early childhood facilities fund to train and link providers with corporate sponsors for capital improvement needs (NJ), business involvement grants (TN), and a revolving loan fund for expansion and improvement of child care centers (MD).
Inclusion Projects	Many states have made inclusion of special needs children a priority and have started statewide training and technical assistance or funded local projects to model inclusion practices (MA, NH, NC, NV, WY). Several of these programs target infants and toddlers (HI, MD). Innovative approaches include funding for a family facilitator to hold workshops for parents and to provide consultations with teachers (IL) and training specifically for parents (MD).

Resources

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The National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) has been established to complement, enhance and promote child care linkages and to serve as a mechanism for supporting quality, comprehensive services for children and families.

NCCIC activities include:

✔**Dissemination of child care information** in response to requests from States, Territories and Tribes, other policy makers, parents, programs, organizations, child care providers and the public.

✔**Outreach** to ACF child care grantees and the broader child care community via a toll-free 800 number, and by fax, mail and electronic media to provide the following information and connections:

- electronic networks and databases
- clearinghouses and national organizations
- sources of child care funding
- ACF issuances
- State and Territorial program activities
- Tribal program activities
- promising practices
- other child care resources

✔**Publication of the *Child Care Bulletin***, distributed 6 times a year to Federal administrators, ACF child care grantees, national child care organizations and others interested in child care issues.

✔**Child care data**. The NCCIC supports the Child Care Bureau in the collection and analysis of child care data and maintains the database of information reported by State, Tribal and Territorial Grantees. The Information Center assists the Child Care Bureau with its analysis of programmatic and expenditure data.

✔**Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for Child Care**. Information and resources are available on-line through the Internet. The address of the NCCIC Gopher is: *ericps.ed.uiuc.edu* then select the menu item for NCCIC. The address of the World Wide Web site is: *http://ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/nccic/nccichome.html*

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The National Child Care Information Center is an activity of the Child Care Technical Assistance Project funded by the CHILD CARE BUREAU, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through a contract with Trans-Management Systems Corporation in cooperation with Collins Management Consulting, Inc. (CMC). The Information Center is administered by CMC.